

# FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

University of Texas Employee Assistance Programs 713.500.3327

## Getting Credit for Your Ideas



**T**here is nothing wrong with wanting credit for your good ideas, but to increase your chances of getting the credit you deserve, brush up on the delivery of your ideas. In group settings, be assertive without being aggressive. Speak clearly while looking group members in the eye. If you have a good idea, ask for discussion so the group develops it further without delay. Where applicable, put detailed ideas in writing before meetings. Pass out copies (with your name on top) while explaining your idea, saying you brought outlines to work from. Email or meet with your boss directly regarding your ideas; this ensures he or she will know which contributions are yours. Don't forget to give credit to others when appropriate — it's only fair and it's what makes teams thrive.

## Making the Most of Your Mistakes



**B**ig or small, mistakes are instant stressors. The key is to minimize their negative impact and learn from them. First, you must own your missteps. You can't learn from something that you can't admit happened. Next, guard your mental health like a watchdog and let go of your feelings of guilt and shame. Analyze the situation rationally to understand what went wrong and how you can do better in the future. Lastly, seek out advice, training, and support as needed.

## Exercise and Forget the Sweat



**M**any people equate exercise with endless hours of huffing, puffing, sweating, and "hurting" at the gym. Don't let this popular misconception keep you from reaping the benefits of increased physical activity. By spending 30 minutes five days a week doing the equivalent of a brisk walk, you will be doing your body and mind a world of good. This will help decrease stress, increase cardiovascular health, and lower your risk of suffering from many ailments. The idea is to just get moving and keep going.

## Teaching a Child to Summon Help



**W**e've all heard marvelous stories about children who save a loved one's life. But would your children be able to rise to the occasion? It's all about preparation. Teach your children how to dial 911 as soon as they can play with the phone. Make sure they know their first and last name. Instruct them to speak loudly and clearly, and to listen carefully for questions and instructions. Go over emergency scenarios, providing more details the older they get. Be sure they understand that calling 911 is not a game, but when in doubt, they should make the call. Routinely review this information with your children.



## Creating a Positive Work Team

**D**o things seem a little tense with your team at work? Is negative energy dragging everyone down? The problem may not be any one member. Instead, it could be a lack of “traditions” that help your team stay productive. Team traditions are an important element in group theory. They are strongly accepted rules about how your team works. When chosen deliberately, maintained, and guarded, your team or group is more likely to stay intact, experience fewer conflicts, and encourage individual members to contribute. When new members join the team, the traditions are passed down. Traditions might include “members do not talk about each other outside the group behind their backs,” “promises to the group by members are kept,” “problems between team members are always brought to the group for resolution,” “when members get distracted during discussions and problem solving, other members can call them off task,” etc. Establishing traditions helps to prevent less desirable habits from emerging within your team. The habits could include the forming of cliques, one person doing all the work, individuals not showing up on time, members becoming isolated, and leadership takeovers by naturally more assertive members, as well as the rejection of new ideas, slower problem solving, confusion, and fewer undelivered promises. The best of teams have problems and conflicts, but the most productive teams and work groups have purposeful traditions and experience greater rewards.

## Relationship Tips for New Graduates

**A**fter graduation, build a network of professional friends, acquaintances, and allies. Begun now, these relationships will be building blocks you’ll point to later as major contributors to your achievements. As you engage with experts who you meet in associations, conferences, and continuing education opportunities, log those identified as valuable contacts. Keep the information separate from a personal phone book. Spot successful professionals who are willing to share their successes and their mistakes. These experts are the ones likely to be the most generous with their hard-fought, short-cutting, and valuable advice. Many seasoned professionals are motivated to give back and help others in their field after they have succeeded. Notice how they welcome questions and are inclined to help others sidestep the common pitfalls. This rare combination of success, willingness to share, and humility make these individuals ideal guides or mentors for you.



## Silver Lining in a Layoff

**L**ayoffs are extremely stressful, but they can have a silver lining. To improve the odds of this being true, plan ahead. Talk to loved ones about the possibility of a layoff, know your expenses, decrease spending, create a “rainy day” fund, and plan for the worst- and best-case scenarios. Keep your resume current and continually network to increase your chances of landing a new job quickly. Remain passionate about your job, but let go of having it define you. Re-examine your interests and consider alternative career paths. If you ever wanted to try something different, a layoff can create the window of opportunity. You will have good days and bad ones after a layoff. Minimize the number of bad days by staying busy with a checklist centered on finding work. A layoff can be the start of a great adventure, but commit to making it happen.

## When Someone You Love Has an Autistic Child

**A**utism is increasingly prevalent, so chances are good you know someone with an autistic child. These parents are under stress, so being emotionally supportive and understanding is a key to being a good friend. Be affirming and positive, nonjudgmental, and one who is patient, knowledgeable, and empathetic. For families with autistic kids, social outings often fall by the wayside, so let your friend know you understand. Do not be hesitant to interact with your friend’s autistic child. Others may forget or be afraid to do so. Don’t underestimate how wonderful your helping out around the house could be for your friend. Show support without being pushy, and you’ll be the type of friend who helps make parenting an autistic child easier.

Source: autismspeaks.org

